

# ***Sustaining Coalitions: Key Elements***

by: April Brubach

[http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/SPF\\_Elements/Sustainability/Sustaining\\_Coalitions\\_Key\\_Elements.htm](http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/SPF_Elements/Sustainability/Sustaining_Coalitions_Key_Elements.htm)

Sustainability is not about hiring a good grant writer or obtaining funding that isn't consistent with your coalition's purpose. It's about more than money. Sustainability is about creating an effective coalition that brings together a community to develop and carry out a strategic plan that effectively addresses a relevant problem. This article is the first in a series on coalition sustainability developed by CADCA's National Coalition Institute.

Coalitions that are short-lived due to lack of sustainability planning can create an atmosphere of distrust within the community, and can limit participation by the community in future community problem-solving efforts.

Many grant opportunities require that coalitions describe how they will sustain their efforts after funding has ended. Research in the field has found several key elements that sustained coalitions have in common and have helped promote their longevity.

As a self-improvement exercise, coalitions may consider whether or not they display these key elements. Keep in mind that successful strategies used by coalitions will vary based on the unique qualities of their community.

## **Leaders who take responsibility for their coalition's success**

To help the coalition succeed long-term, leaders should take responsibility for setting the public agenda for change, brokering connections among people and resources, and leveraging additional or new resources for projects.

## **Involvement of community leaders, community partner organizations, and a wide variety of community members**

Coalitions should include key community stakeholders who are well-positioned to soften the resistance and barriers to coalition efforts. In addition, coalitions should have members that are part of the affected population. Involving those most affected, coalition efforts will be informed about problems and potential barriers to the solutions. Also, by working together with partner organizations and the private sector, coalitions can build capacity, raise community awareness, and avoid duplication of effort. All partners should be doing their part and contributing toward the effort.

## **Diversified funding from the start**

A fundraising program should be part of the strategic plan for coalitions. Through implementation over time, coalitions become more effective at raising funds that in turn lead to a greater capacity and further increase the chances of survival. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including government, private foundations, local businesses, and in-kind donations.

## **Solid Infrastructure**

Strong administrative functioning helps coalitions operate efficiently. It also aids the coalition's ability to document outcomes, which can lead to additional funding.

# **Sustainability: Principles of Collaborative Leadership**

By April Brubach

[http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/SPF\\_Elements/Sustainability/Sustainability\\_Principles.htm](http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/SPF_Elements/Sustainability/Sustainability_Principles.htm)

Strong leadership is essential to sustaining community coalitions. Having a leader who takes responsibility for the success of the coalition by setting the public agenda for change, brokering connections among people and resources, and leveraging additional or new resources for projects can go a long way in supporting the longevity of a coalition. Effective leaders see the big picture. Jane Callahan, Director of the National Coalition Institute and former Director of Fighting Back Partnership of Vallejo, California agrees that leaders should “Look for trends and opportunities and “creatively” align strategies with emerging opportunities.”

This follow-up article to the May 20, 2004 “Sustaining Coalitions: Key Elements” seeks to detail important principles of leadership that help coalitions improve effectiveness and sustainability over time. Coalitions that effectively address local problems are typically made up of diverse members of the community. The challenge for coalition leaders is to encourage positive communication and group decision-making across the variety of personalities, agendas, and skill sets of members. Research suggests a collaborative style of leadership helps sustain coalitions. Leaders can focus on developing skills that are based on the principles of collaborative leadership as one method for improving the long-term outlook of their organization.

## **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES**

- **Keep the coalition focused on goal:**  
Successful collaborative leaders keep the diverse members attuned to their common goal while keeping an eye on the big picture to help inform group processes.
- **Locate, persuade and utilize influential champions and partners within the community:**  
Strong leaders bring community ties to the table and develop partnerships with organizations and individuals that help sustain the coalition.
- **Maintain and protect collaborative decision-making, planning and infrastructure building process:**  
Instead of being the decision-maker, collaborative leaders actively seek to continue the group decision-making, planning and infrastructure building processes.
- **Diversify, motivate and energize your coalition’s volunteer base:**  
In order to increase your coalition’s sustainability, leaders should help recruit diverse community members, get them involved in ways that are meaningful to the volunteer, and keep them feeling upbeat about their experience as a member of the team.
- **Help resolve member conflicts:**  
Collaborative leaders can make deliberate efforts to help resolve member conflicts in open, unbiased ways that encourage compromise.
- **Communicate with the community:**  
Coalition leaders that bring excellent written and verbal communication skills to the table help get the coalition message out to the community and potential partners.
- **Cultivate leadership in coalition members, including youth:**  
Coalitions gain momentum under the initial inspired involvement of those who establish the coalition. However, in order for a coalition to sustain that momentum, it is crucial that new leadership is both allowed and encouraged to develop.

## Coalition Leader Sustainability Functions

For each coalition leader identified indicate: a) whether the individual (or position) ***should*** be involved in the function and b) whether the individual ***currently is*** involved in the function

Coalition Leader: <i>Name/Position</i>	Leadership Functions						
	Keeps the coalition focused on goal	Builds champions/partners in the community	Maintains/protects collaborative decision making, planning	Diversifies, motivates and energizes coalition's volunteer base	Helps resolve member conflicts	Communicates with the community	Cultivates leadership in coalition members, including youth
Coalition Chairperson							
Executive Director							
Key Leader Champion							

## **Nevada Drug, Alcohol and Child Abuse Prevention Information**

### **BEST Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Nevada**

#### **Our Mission Statement**

**TO IMPLEMENT AND FACILITATE SCHOOL  
AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE A  
SAFE AND DRUG-FREE LIFESTYLE FOR  
THE WELL-BEING OF ALL NEVADANS**

**BRINGING EVERYONE'S STRENGTH'S TOGETHER**

The BEST Coalition Corporation is a community-based 501©3 nonprofit organization. The Coalition is comprised of youth & family agencies and individuals throughout the community. The growing membership represents a broad spectrum of the community that includes education, business, media, law enforcement, direct youth service organizations, family resource centers, civic groups, and government. BEST Coalition optimizes the strength of each member agency to focus on its mission of prevention education. A Board of Directors selected from the membership governs the corporation.

#### **BEST Coalition Goals**

- Educate & enable youth to reject illegal drugs, alcohol & tobacco.
- Increase media partnerships and public relations campaigns that target illegal drugs.
- Increase parental education & support regarding illegal drug, tobacco, & alcohol use.
- Improve the coordination and collaboration in the community.
- Maintain a clearinghouse of ATOD education, information, resources and drug/alcohol & other prevention related issues.

Source: <http://www.nvbest.org/>

## Cultural Competency Strategies for Sustainability

<i>Strategies for Sustainability</i>	<i>Application Suggestions</i>
<p><i>Intentional</i> Plan for commitment and dedication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to reading a book that raises your cultural awareness every month</li> <li>• Dedicate time at a staff meeting to address issues of cultural competency</li> </ul>
<p><i>Creative</i> Discover ways to make learning and change enjoyable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend community events that increase your awareness</li> <li>• Start an organizational e-newsletter that offers ideas to 'expand worldview'</li> </ul>
<p><i>Challenging</i> Press for real personal and organizational change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out a local social justice group and become involved</li> <li>• Take more time to recruit diverse candidates for open positions</li> </ul>
<p><i>Supported</i> Find resources to lend support to these efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find someone (co-worker, friend, family member) to uphold accountability</li> <li>• Align with partners that support efforts to promote cultural competency</li> </ul>
<p><i>Realistic</i> Set realistic goals, expectations, and timelines for action and change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a regular (monthly, yearly) reflection of actions and efforts</li> <li>• Make cultural competency a priority in organizational strategic planning</li> </ul>

## SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The coalition's plans for maintaining momentum and expanding are currently in place. The strategies are fluid, and subject to revision as needed. Steps/Strategies to sustain a stable coalition infrastructure include:

1. **Expanding the Coalition:** Continued open door policy for new members to join in addition to active recruitment by current members. We currently have a diverse membership across several sectors of the community and it continues to grow as more become aware of the work we do.
2. **Exploring the Potential for Regionalization-** The coalition invited several new partners to participate in the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Program (OJJDP) grant application. By working with the new partners, we could reach a significantly larger geographic area. Our service area would grow from reaching 9,000 persons to potentially reaching 25,000. In addition, this is the first attempt by any local organization to regionalize substance abuse prevention in a systematic and coordinated way. This alone, with each additional agency's buy-in, expertise and in-kind donations will assist in sustaining our work.
3. **Utilizing In-Kind Donations:** Collaborating organizations providing in kind donations such as office space, copier use, fax, telephone, office supplies, staff time, etc. We are looking to build capacity from within the coalition membership by tapping into our own resources and sharing one's area of expertise.
4. **Identifying Additional Funding:** On going search for federal, state, and community funding sources. ABC Regional Hospital has a 3 year subscription to BIG Online. It is a website that lists over 75, 000 funding sources- representing over \$100 billion in granting power from corporations, foundations and government. Several coalition members are experienced grant writers and are willing to give of their time.
5. **Sharing the Work:** Empower and assist local entities such as schools, corporations and the hospital (lead agency) to take over or share the administration and costs of projects and programs currently funded through the coalition.
6. **Keeping Current:** As the coalition grows, and the communities continue to change, so will the need to revisit the mission and vision to accurately represent our goals.
7. **Creating Buy-In:** Continued use of media and members to inform the community as well as key leaders of the drug related issues that face our region and the work the coalition does to address the issues. Increased awareness of the social development needs of our youth and the requirement of the community as a whole to participate in improving the health of our region is a vital.
8. **Formalizing our Structure:** This grass roots effort will become more formalized as we grow as an organization. For example, by-laws, officers, and voting procedures will be considered.
9. **Evaluation-** A local University non-traditional doctoral student who has also worked in coalition building has agreed to assist the coalition. He will use process outcomes as a measure of the development of the coalition and offer recommendations for improvement.

## Coalition Sustainability Checklist

Yes!	Sort of	No!	????	Criteria
<b>Element 1: Leaders take responsibility for their coalition's success</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coalition leaders have been identified
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coalition leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coalition leaders actively fill their roles and responsibilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training and recognition are provided to coalition leaders (and others)
<b>Element 2: Involve community leaders, partner organizations, and a variety of community members</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New members are actively recruited
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The coalition reaches out to community organizations on a regular basis
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New members are oriented and trained
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Champions have been identified and trained
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Champions are used effectively
<b>Element 3: Diversified funding from the start</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A long-term budget has been developed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A long-term funding plan has been developed
				The funding plan includes:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Local fund raising
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Grant writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Professional fund development activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Inclusion in organizational budgets
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Fees for Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Other
<b>Element 4: Solid Infrastructure</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Job descriptions" for all roles created by the coalition are written
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Members agree on the expectations for active membership
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Objectives and authority of each committee/workgroup are established
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meetings held regularly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agenda is used – distributed before the meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting kept on track/minutes recorded
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail lists, on-line groups, blogs keep information flowing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact made with reporter/editor at your local papers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting minutes, agendas and other information available
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility for fiscal accounting, 501(c)(3) status, insurance etc. is clear
<b>Element 5: A clear focus on the coalition's goals</b>				
				The coalition has clear statements of:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Vision
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Mission
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Specific goals and objectives
				The Vision, Mission, goals and objectives are clearly communicated to:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- All coalition members
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Community leaders
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Partner organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- The community